

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The Examiner stated that the title is not descriptive. Applicant notes that the title has been amended.

Claims 1, 5-7, 10-12 and 16-20 have been amended. Claims 21-23 have been added.

The Examiner objected to claims 1, 5-7, and 16-20 due to informalities. Applicant notes that claims 1, 5-7, and 16-20 have been amended to over the Examiner's objections.

The Examiner rejected claims 7-12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okuno et al. U.S. Pat. No. 5,732,309 in view of Iwaki et al. U.S. Pat. No. 6,483,995. Applicant notes that claim 7 has been amended to further distinguish from the cited prior art. Applicant respectfully contends that the combination of Okuno and Iwaki does not teach all the limitations of amended claim 7. More specifically the combination of Okuno and Iwaki do not teach where the recording medium guide is turnable to close the medium introducing port when the fixing device is attached or detached from the image forming apparatus. First, Okuno discloses shutters 5a, 5b that open and close an opening to a fixing device 18 where the shutters also serve as medium sheet guides. However, the shutters open and close only during a copying operation to allow a medium sheet to pass through the fixing device. See Abstract and Summary of the Invention. Second, Iwaki discloses a removable fixing unit 17. Referring to column 4, line 31-41 of Iwaki, the specification briefly explains how the fixing unit can be removed from the image forming apparatus. However, Iwaki does not disclose shutters or a guide or any other type of mechanism that closes an opening to the fixing unit when the fixing unit is attached or detached from the image forming apparatus. Thus, the combination of Okuno and Iwaki do not teach where the recording medium guide is turnable to close the medium introducing port when the fixing device is attached or detached from the image forming apparatus. Applicant therefore respectfully contends that

Okuno and Iwaki do not teach all the limitations of claim 7.

Applicant notes that claims 8-12 depend either directly or indirectly on amended claim 7, thus all argument pertaining to claim 7 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

The Examiner stated that claims 1 and 6 would be allowable if amended to overcome the objections set forth in this Office action. Applicant notes that claims 1 and 6 have been amended to overcome the Examiner's objections and are thus in condition for allowance.

The Examiner stated that claims 2-5 and 13-20 would be allowable if amended to overcome the objections set forth in this Office action. Applicant notes that claims 5 and 16-20 have been amended to overcome the Examiner's objections and that claims 2-5 and 13-20 depend either directly or indirectly from allowable claim 1 and are thus in condition for allowance.

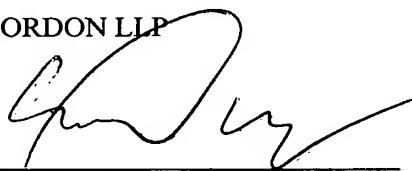
In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 36104.

Respectfully submitted,

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